

Frequently Asked Questions

Surrey Care Trust Firewalk - 23 November 2023

What is Firewalking?

Firewalking is the act of walking barefoot over a bed of hot wooden coals. A combination of pine, ash and oak is burnt and when the fire has burned to red-hot embers it is raked level and prepared for the walk. Participants go to the fire – remove their footwear and one by one are invited to walk the coals.

History of Firewalking

Firewalking has quite a widespread history in many parts of the world. Africa, Europe, The Pacific Islands, Polynesia, The Mediterranean, The Caribbean, and South, East, and Central Asia are all origins of Firewalking. These acts of strength, courage, and awakening have been in use for a variety of purposes over the years. Examples include healing, competition, display of faith, initiation, and to allot justice.

The earliest recorded ritual of Firewalking dates all the way back to 1200 BC during the Iron Age, where two Brahmin priests took a Firewalk together as a competition. The competition stated that whoever walked the furthest on the hot coals was the victor and had their accomplishment documented.

Is it a Trick?

No. The fire is very real. The embers will be glowing red-hot – we can often measure the temperature at around 1200 degrees Fahrenheit. You will have bare feet, and they will not have been treated in any way.

Do I have to run?

Not at all, running actually pushes your feet deeper into the embers. A quick walking pace is sufficient. You'll be shown the correct pace in the training session on the night of the event.

What if I change my mind on the night, do I have to Firewalk?

No one is forced to do the Firewalk, participation is 100% voluntary. If you decide on the night, you do not want to walk, that is perfectly fine, you are welcome to stay at the venue and participate by encouraging others as they do so.

Is this event accessible?

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the event, those with accessibility needs will not be able to take part but are more than welcome to come and watch.

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Is it Safe?

There is an inherent risk in any activity involving fire. It is important that participants pay attention to all the training and heed the advice and instruction of the trainer, firewatchers, and spotters.

Whilst absolute safety is not guaranteed, proper procedure reduces risk to the achievable minimum. Failure to adhere to the rules of the event, including standing in one spot too long or attempting to run across the coals, can increase the odds of blisters and burning.

There will be first Aiders on hand should anything happen.

Will it Hurt?

The sensation is described by some as walking on eggshells, others as walking on hot sand. Each walker has his or her own experience. I have not known walkers to experience pain, indeed when the opportunity arises many will walk across the coals more than once.

What kind of side effects are most common?

The most common side effect of the firewalk is hot spots on the soles of the feet, like a sunburn, which can be treated with aloe vera. Fewer than 1% of participants experience hot spots or blisters as part of the firewalk and their symptoms are typically resolved in one or two days.

Will I be hypnotised?

There is no hypnotism involved. You will be fully awake and alert.

Do I need to be fit?

There is no strenuous physical exercise involved. If you can walk normally then you should manage the Firewalk perfectly well. If you have any doubts, please consult your GP before attending.

How should I prepare?

There is no preparation to undertake. No treatment of the feet or mental exercise, just the training provided at the seminar. You should abstain from the consumption of alcohol or drugs prior to the event. Any person who is in the opinion of the trainer unfit to participate will NOT be permitted to take part.

What do I wear on the night?

As no special clothes are required, casual clothing is fine. Please ensure if you wear trousers they can be rolled up and there is no obstacle to removing your socks.

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Alcohol And Prescribed/Non-Prescribed Drugs

Due to the inherent risks associated with firewalking, any substances which adversely affect the operation of your nervous system will have a negative impact on your ability to walk safely over hot coals. Any person who appears to be visibly intoxicated will be declined the opportunity to firewalk.

If you are taking any prescribed medication, you are unsure about, please refer to your local GP for advice.

What happens on the evening of the event?

Registration begins at **5:30pm and closes at 5.55pm**. If you miss registration, you will NOT be able to participate in the event.

At 6.00pm, participants will attend an hour long mandatory long safety seminar. During this seminar Scott Bell, from UK Firewalks, will coach participants and explain how to prepare to walk on a bed of embers. **Kindly note**, if the trainers feel participants are not sufficiently trained or otherwise unprepared, they will NOT permit participants to complete the firewalk. Please note Spectators are **NOT** permitted to sit in on the workshop.

All firewalkers will then be brought out to the prepared fire lane at approximately **7.00pm**. Participants must always keep suitable footwear on unless in the fire area itself. This area will be checked before the event and monitored during proceedings to ensure a safe surface to avoid cuts and reduce tripping hazards.

After the walk, you'll receive a very big cheer and a certificate! We will take plenty of photos so you can proudly share them with friends and family.

Where is the Firewalk being held?

Surrey Sports Park, GU2 7AD

Will there be parking available?

Surrey Sports Park has **two car parks** available to members and guests using our facilities from 06.00 – 23.30, weekdays and weekends.

What must I bring?

- Yourself and an open mind
- Wet wipes for wiping your feet
- An old towel to wipe your feet after the walk
- A waterproof jacket
- Some cosy socks for afterwards